PROFESSOR OF OPERATIONS

(by Chief, Southeast Europe Division, DD/P)

[redacted]

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Coming back into the Clandestine Services after a tour in the Office of Training, I find there are still widespread misconceptions about the value of such a tour for the professional DD/P man. I shared some of those misconceptions when I rather grudgingly accepted an assignment to OTR in April 1953, but have had over the next thirty months in OTR and nine months back in the Clandestine Services an excellent chance to test them against the facts. Here, then, are some first-hand observations for those of my colleagues who still feel like Shakespeare's

> ... schoolboy, with his satchel
> And shining morning face, creeping like snail
> Unwillingly to school.

Let me put the old stereotyped prejudices in blunt language:

1. Training isn't very important — it's experience that counts. As a corollary, assignment to OTR is a form of exile, or at best a detour.

2. Training is so far out of the main stream of events that you'll stagnate in a backwater of dreary routine.

3. If you ever get into Training you'll never get out.

4. Those who can, do; those who can't, teach.

Every one of those notions is false. Let's demolish them one by one.

1. Certainly the importance of Training to the outfit was not recognized during our first several years. Outside pressures, which reached their climax when Korea made World War III seem imminent, impelled us to a frantic haste altogether incommensurate with the difficulty and importance of the job to be done. We recruited too fast, we sent people out too fast, we skimped Training wherever possible and in literally hundreds of cases omitted it entirely. All in the name of national emergency. It's easy and not very profitable in these somewhat quieter times to criticize the mistakes we made in those days; but at least we dare not forget that

many of our most grievous blunders were the direct and inescapable results of lack of training. Men did get that valuable experience that was supposed to be so much more urgent than training, but at great (and I for one feel unjustifiable) cost. The classic statement of the importance of training to CIA, signalling the end of an era, appears in the Jackson Committee's report to the President in mid-1953:

> "The greatest limitation of effective covert activity is the shortage of skilled personnel. Although the total personnel strength of CIA is probably adequate, only a small part of it is as yet qualified to plan and carry out covert operations effectively and securely. The Committee recommends that for the immediate future CIA give higher priority to training, development of improved operating principles, and expansion of its pool of qualified operators. In making this recommendation the Committee recognized that such a policy might reduce CIA's current capabilities. It would mean, however, that within two or three years its capabilities for secure and effective operations should be greatly enhanced."

No one ever tried very hard to refute those conclusions, because by 1953 they were pretty well self-evident, and in fact we've made a good deal of progress since then on all fronts. Some of the signs of increased recognition of training have been the quotas imposed throughout the outfit for minimum enrollment in OTR courses, the extension of the basic DD/P operations training from ten weeks to sixteen, and especially this statement of DD/P policy in [redacted] 25X1A 25X1 [redacted] ("Tours of Intelligence Officers as Instructors in the Office of Training"):

> "Clandestine Services policy recognizes the rotation of qualified CS Operations officers into instructional assignments in the Office of Training as valuable both to the individuals and to the organization. The individual acquires broadened skills, a wider knowledge of the problems and workings of the Agency, and in many cases new opportunities for interesting operational assignments in the future. The Agency profits by passing on the experience of veterans to its newcomers in training which has steadily improved over the years.
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> "A tour as instructor in the Office of Training ordinarily lasts 30 months. No change of career designation is involved, unless the individual particularly desires it, and rotation back into the Clandestine Services at the end of the 30 months

is effected as easily as any rotation within the Clandestine Services. Consideration for future operational assignments is not only not diminished by a tour in the Office of Training but in many cases is actually enhanced."

2. The old backwater argument was what worried me most when I went into OTR. But what happened was that I learned far more about the outfit as a whole, how the parts fit together and why, than I ever had in eight years in a single area division with the same old complex, but after all fairly parochial, problems. I made first-hand acquaintance with DD/P concerns in the Far East, in Latin America, and other parts of the world outside my previous narrow area specialization. My knowledge of a wide variety of operations, and of the people who run them, increased greatly. Much of this came about because I happened to be deputy director of Training, but the instructors similarly have been broadened by wide contacts. They rub elbows with fellow-case-officers-turned-instructors from all over the world, and get a much more comprehensive sense of the accumulated experience of the Agency than they ever got in X Branch or Y Station.

And the present method of instruction has also contributed to that broadening. Those who took operations courses five or six years ago will remember the artificial flavoring of the cases discussed and the problems worked out. In the few instances where genuine cases were used, they were sterilized to the point of being dull and nearly meaningless: The locale would be changed from [redacted] to [redacted] or some other improbable spot, and most of the meaty and significant details left out. But for several years now, OTR has been able to use real cases with as much accurate detail as there is time to cram in, and with so little sterilization that both instructors and students know they are acquiring the real stuff of Agency experience. The result for one instructor after another has been acquiring new skills and knowledge in OTR that fitted them for new types of assignments or new areas or both. Some instructors, by being assigned to covert agent training, have actually had more experience in handling agents than in any previous DD/P assignment, and nearly all get wide experience in dealing with people in general.

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3. It used to be true, because of the general reluctance to accept an assignment in OTR, that if you once got in you'd have a hard time getting out; nobody would come forward to replace you. But for a couple of years now the rule quoted in the [redacted] above has been working to the advantage of the individual. Any man from DD/P is eligible to rotate back into DD/P after thirty months, which is

25X1

about the same length of time you'd spend preparing for and then fulfilling any other tour. In a number of cases, by agreement between OTR and DD/P when particularly pressing needs arise, the tour doesn't even last the thirty months. Living up to this rotation rule has often imposed a severe strain on OTR, but I know of no case in the last three years where a man's importance to OTR has kept him from accepting a desirable appointment in the Clandestine Services. In fact OTR has also rotated to DD/P many men who never came from there in the first place -- men hired and trained as instructors by OTR, with the TR career service designation -- because the DD/P experience will make them better instructors when they return to their own home base, but also because the DD/P has been keen to get them even if only for a tour or two.

4. Those who can, do. In the days of our most rapid expansion, when only a handful could be spared from DD/P to conduct training, OTR had to hire a good many instructors almost off the streets: no previous experience in CIA, no experience in any field quite like CIA operations. You'd think such men would be poorly prepared to teach our business, and equally poorly prepared for rotation into responsible jobs in the field. Maybe they were, at first, but by the time the rotation rule got going these men had taken on a breadth of knowledge that made them highly desirable, and in several cases there has been a real free-for-all competition for them. (Note, by the way, that a good instructor during one tour makes an impression on some hundreds of his colleagues, some of whom because of lack of training in the early days come to OTR as students after they are already fairly high in the hierarchy. I remember, without rancor, a division chief taking the Operations course several years ago, and putting what he had learned about recruitment to such good use that he recruited one of the instructors on the spot.) One such instructor without previous DD/P experience had five overseas jobs to choose from when he was ready to rotate; a number of others have had three or four good offers overseas or in headquarters. The man who developed the war plans course now has an excellent assignment in that field overseas. In the early PM days, OTR hired many specialists to teach students who for the most part didn't show up; then when some of the big PM jobs developed it was the instructors who were best qualified to do them, and as a result they are now scattered all over the world. Other instructors new to DD/P have become deputy chiefs of branches in two area divisions, and have joined the FI, PP, and CI staffs.

As for those who had previous DD/P experience, let me give you some case histories, to show you the types of jobs they were wanted for after a tour in OTR:

a. Chief of an overseas base → chief instructor in an OTR course → chief of station. (Two cases of this. Both, incidentally, shared the old prejudice and thought their assignment in OTR had been engineered by some enemy. But one of them told me three months after his arrival, and again when he was yanked out less than two years later to become a station chief, that the chance he got in OTR to stand back and see Clandestine Services work in perspective, to study new ways of going about it, to put his ideas into orderly shape and test them against the experience of others, was the best thing that had happened to him in the outfit. He spoke as a dedicated DD/P man, who expects to spend the rest of his life in DD/P operations.)

b. Case officer overseas → operations instructor in OTR → section chief overseas → chief of a large area branch.

c. Branch desk officer (female) → instructor → a senior administrative officer in a large station.

d. Chief of a small base → instructor developing a new course → senior research analyst on a big project in a new field. One of several who discovered in OTR a new activity that fitted their abilities and inclinations better than the old.

e. Senior DD/P job → senior OTR job → chief of a large station.

f. One-man station — instructor in the Operations course -- three firm offers. I don't know which one he took, but he turned down the job of deputy chief of a large branch.

All those I've alluded to above are among the many men and women who have rotated from OTR to DD/P in the last three years. So far as I have been able to follow their careers I know they have been doing well in the Clandestine Services. Not even the promotions they won in OTR have damaged their chances of rotation, though I used to worry about that; out of dozens of cases, I know of only two who had to take a one-grade cut to get the DD/P jobs they wanted, and one of those got his old grade back within six months because of his outstanding performance in the new job.

The senior officers of the Regular Army who led us in World War II had in many cases spent much more than half their careers as either students or instructors. Most of them entered the war without ever having heard that famous shot fired in anger; certainly they had not led large troop units under fire. Instead, they been instructors at the Command and General Staff School or Benning or Sill or

Knox. They knew, and their careers proved, the pointlessness of the old canard, "those who can't, teach." It was precisely those who in the Thirties were good enough to be appointed instructors at Leavenworth who in the Forties were good enough to deserve all those stars.*

Now we in the Agency have our own Fort Leavenworth - Benning - Knox, and we also have an advantage over the armed services in that we don't have to wait for a hot war to get first-hand experience. But even so, we're all in training all the time for harder jobs to come, and we'd do well to recognize, as the armed forces do, that the instructor's job is a central point for service that improves the whole Agency's effort. And to recognize too, not entirely incidentally, the rewards and opportunities open to the men and women who are lucky enough to perform that service.

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* I heartily commend to you Command Missions by General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., as one of the best books on the war but especially as a remarkable demonstration of how long training, teaching, and fire-tested experience combined to develop outstanding battle leadership. This great combat commander entered the war entirely without combat experience. In 1940 he was a cavalry major who had spent twelve of the preceding fifteen years in schools -- four as student, eight as instructor in the Cavalry and Command and General Staff Schools. But only five years later he was a lieutenant general in command of an army, and later got his fourth star. Among the junior-officer instructors at Leavenworth with Truscott were (to give their later ranks): General Wade H. Haislip, General John E. Hull, Lt. General Manton S. Eddy, Lt. General William K. Harrison, Jr., Lt. General Frank W. Milburn, Lt. General Lewis H. Brereton, and Lt. General George E. Stratemyer. Eight instructors, twenty-seven stars. Almost without exception the other instructors serving with them rose to command at least a division. And other Army schools added to the list: For example the founder and first instructor of the Armored School was a Captain George S. Patton, Jr. Such men were appointed instructors because they were fine soldiers, then they built on their training experience to become outstanding.